

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

This is a note about the new discoveries of SS-9s and SS-11s in relation to the estimate. It has been discussed and revised by the Board. Distributed only to DDI, DDS&T, and Bruce Clarke.

ABBOT SMITH
Director
National Estimates

Attachment:

4 April 1969
(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

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4 April 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: NIE 11-8-68 Revisited: Recent Developments in
the Soviet ICBM Force

1. At the time NIE 11-8-68 was approved by the USIB last fall (3 October 1968), we had identified 68 groups of launchers for the SS-11 ICBM (10 launchers per group) operational or under construction in the USSR. We estimated that all 680 of those launchers would be operational by mid-1970, and that as many as four additional groups could have escaped detection and be sufficiently advanced in construction to be operational by that time. Thus our estimate of the number of SS-11 launchers which could be operational by mid-1970 was expressed as a spread of 680-720. Based on the evidence then available, NIPP-69 projected an SS-11 force goal of 700-750 launchers, leveling off in 1971.

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in fact, at least four groups of SS-11 launchers under construction which had not been detected at the time NIE 11-8-68 was approved. Moreover, we have [] six additional group starts which were probably begun after the estimate was approved. The number of identified groups now stands at 78. All of these groups will probably be filled out and completed by mid-1970, giving the Soviets a total of 780 operational SS-11 launchers -- some 60 above the high side of the NIE projection, and 30 above the high side of the force goal projected in the NIPP.

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3. In NIE 11-8-68, we raised the possibility that the SS-11 program "may be approaching its planned level." It is too early to say that the recent deployment activity negates this possibility; we cannot determine at this point whether it represents the final phase of the program or a continuation of SS-11 deployment at a level comparable to that of the past two years. It is clear, of course, that the Soviet SS-11 ICBM force will exceed the 700-750 that we projected in NIPP-69. But there is nothing as yet to demonstrate that it will exceed the force

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of 750-1,050 small ICBMs that we projected; this force included some 50-300 SS-13 ICBMs, which are comparable to the SS-11 in accuracy and payload capacity.

4. It is possible that the Soviets are not wholly satisfied with the SS-13 and have decided to cut back that program and to deploy additional SS-11s to offset the reduction. We have now [] 32 silos for the SS-13, all at the complex at Yoshkar Ola, 20 of which will probably be completed by mid-1969. This program is peculiar in that deployment has been limited to only one complex. In other programs, construction has gone on at several complexes simultaneously. []

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[] The anomaly here is that the SS-13 has never been tested to a range greater than 4,700 n.m. which would give it only marginal value as an ICBM; with this range and fired from Yoshkar Ola, it could not attack any targets in the US. We cannot say whether the Soviets feel sufficiently confident in the missile's performance that they see no need to test it to full range (a definite break with past practice since they have

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tested every system to full range before deployment) or whether the performance of the missile is such that it cannot be flown to its estimated range of 5,500 n.m.

5. In NIE 11-8-68, we estimated a mid-1970 SS-9 force of 228-240 launchers. In the six months since the estimate was approved, we have detected only one new group start. Barring the detection of any further groups that were started before April this year, the SS-9 force in mid-1970 will number 234 launchers. In NIPP-69 we projected an SS-9 force of 234-246 launchers. If this projection is correct, it would appear that this program is reaching its planned level. The detection of starts of another group or two over the next several months would not change this view.

6. Another interesting bit of evidence relates to the launch sites at Tyuratam which we believed to be intended for a new, large, liquid-propelled ICBM as a successor to the SS-9. When NIE 11-8-68 was written, we estimated that such a system could reach IOC in the 1970-1972 period. We judged that it probably would have greater accuracy and possibly a larger payload than the SS-9, and that it may be the best candidate

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for carrying a new sophisticated reentry system. Since the estimate was issued, however, there has been virtually no work done on the still incomplete launch facilities, and as a matter of fact work probably had stopped on those facilities a month or so before the estimate was published. The only activity that we have detected recently has been at the control facility of this site. We cannot yet determine what this stoppage means, but the program is certainly not proceeding as we would expect it to if such a missile is under development. If it is not, and if the SS-9 program is in fact leveling off, the Soviet force of large, liquid-propelled ICBMs will probably fall short of the 334-396 launchers projected in NIPP-69. (In addition to SS-9s, that force included 100-150 launchers for the large, follow-on system.)

7. We see nothing in these recent developments to indicate that the Soviets are presently seeking a counterforce capability. If they were, we would expect to see some combination of the following: a vigorous SS-9 deployment program; development of the large, follow-on ICBM system; deployment of launchers for that system; an R&D effort to achieve greater accuracy; and a MIRV development program. None of these trends is apparent

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either in development or deployment activity. Instead, the Soviets appear to be emphasizing deployment of the SS-11, which lacks the combination of accuracy and yield required in a counterforce weapon.

8. There have been no developments since NIE 11-8-68 was published which suggest that the eventual Soviet force goal exceeds the high side of the estimated range of 1,100-1,500 launchers. The Soviets now have a force of 1,274 launchers, operational or under construction. [REDACTED]

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The Soviets may keep these in service as bargaining counters for the arms control talks, but we believe that they will eventually be phased out. Thus, as we see the force today, we would reaffirm the judgment of NIE 11-8-68 that "the Soviets have the option of stabilizing their ICBM force at a numerical level about equal to that of the present US, or of going for a substantially larger number." The recent evidence casts doubt, not upon the numbers of launchers estimated, but on the "mix" of ICBMs in the force projected in NIPP-69, particularly with respect to the introduction of new systems. This evidence,

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nevertheless, supports the view reflected in the NIPP projections, that the Soviet ICBM force will be composed largely of small, "city-busting" ICBMs with smaller numbers of large ICBMs that could be used against hard targets.

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Director
National Estimates

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